What is claimed is:

1. A bearing pad assembly comprising:

a first housing having an exterior surface and defining a bore extending at least part-way through said first housing;

a first load bearing member coupled to said first housing, and defining an outwardly facing first abutment surface;

a second housing defining a bore of a shape similar to said exterior surface of said first housing and adapted to slideably receive said first housing therein;

a second load bearing member coupled to said second housing and defining an outwardly facing second abutment surface opposite to said first abutment surface; and

biasing means for urging said first and second load bearing members away from one another in response to a load being imposed upon at least one of said first and second abutment surfaces.

2. The assembly of claim 1 wherein the biasing means includes at least one compression spring positioned within the bore of at least the first housing.

3. The assembly of claim 2 wherein the compression spring deforms non-linearly in response to said load imposed on at least one of the first and second abutment surfaces.

4. The assembly of claim 3 wherein the compression spring is made of a substantially solid resilient material.

5. The assembly of claim 4 wherein said material is substantially an organic polymer.

6. The assembly of claim 5 wherein said organic polymer is substantially polyurethane.

7. The assembly of claim 4 wherein the solid resilient material is in the form of a toroidal ring.

8. The assembly of claim 4 further comprising;

at least two springs; and

a plate positioned between the springs, separating the springs from one another.

9. The assembly of claim 1 further comprising at least one slip lining positioned between said first housing exterior surface and a bore wall defining said second housing bore.

10. The assembly of claim 9 wherein the slip lining has a coefficient of static friction less than that of the first housing.

11. The assembly of claim 9 wherein the slip lining is attached to the first housing exterior surface.

12. The assembly of claim 9 wherein a second slip lining is attached to the second housing bore wall.

13. The assembly of claim 9 wherein the slip lining is made substantially of an organic polymer.

14. The assembly of claim 13 wherein the slip lining is made substantially of polypropylene.

15. A bearing pad assembly comprising:

a first housing having a bore extending through said first housing;

a first load bearing member coupled to said first housing and defining an abutment surface opposite to said first housing;

a second housing having a bore extending through said second housing, adapted to telescopically receive said first housing;

a second load bearing member coupled to said second housing and defining an abutment surface opposite to said second housing; and

at least one spring in the shape of a toroidal ring positioned within said first housing bore, for urging said first and second abutment surfaces away from each other in response to a load imposed on at least one of said abutment surfaces.